

From "A Comparative Dictionary of the Pwo Karen Dialect"

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GRAMMATICAL INTRODUCTION.

[The sections of this introduction correspond with those of Dr. Gilmore's Grammar of Sgaw-Karen. In a large number of cases Dr. Gilmore's actual phraseology is retained and it is hoped that the practical advantage which accrue from this arrangement may mitigate the charge of plagiarism.]

1. The Pwo dialect of Karen is spoken by people who call themselves Sho ၫ် or Hplon Mu-hteik ၫ်မိထံ. Sgaw Karens are called by Pwos, Shan ၫ် or Hplon Hpa-hteik ၫ်ဖာထံ. The alternative titles mean respectively Karens of the mother and father stems. In Karen sex-couplets, the female element is always given precedence which way perhaps be a vestige of matriarchy. The inference in this present case is that Pwo, being the mother-stem, is the senior of the two chief Karen dialects.

The Pwo dialect is split up into two chief sub-dialects which are called by the people themselves ပုဒံ and ဘဲကျဲ. These dialects are sufficiently diverse in pronunciation and vocabulary to make Karens who only know one resort to Burmese when they wish to converse together. The ပုဒံ sub-dialect is regarded as the senior and it is the pronunciation and vocabulary of this sub-dialect which is preserved in the printed books. The ပုဒံ live for the most part in Tenasserim Division and the ဘဲကျဲ in the Delta of the Irrawaddy. The two dialects are referred to in this work as Tenasserim Pwo (T.P.) and Delta Pwo (D.P.)

2. The Pwos have an abundant store of traditions consisting of folk-lore and legends strongly tinged with Buddhism. They have proved much more susceptible to Burmese influence than their Sgaw brethren and their folk-lore shows traces of this influence. Attempts have been made from time to time

to reduce these legends to writing and to give them the appearance of incunabula by the use of palm-leaved pages and unfamiliar characters. The Talaing alphabet has been used for this purpose but has never had any vogue. Dr. Mason has preserved one of these legends in his "Synopsis of a Grammar of the Karen Language."

3. The same erudite, if somewhat wayward, scholar was the pioneer of the modern Pwo Karen script. Dr. Mason used English and Greek characters to make up the defects of Burmese but the result was not very satisfactory, as may be gathered from the fact that it was called by the Karens လံ့ဆဲၵ်း "the scratchings of fowls!" Dr. Mason's system was simplified by Dr. Brayton and it is this system which is now exclusively used in the printing of Pwo books. In the present work the spelling is that of T.P; but where pronunciation is indicated it is usually that of D.P.

4. The Alphabet.

The letters of the alphabet are derived from the Burmese characters with certain modifications; there are twenty-five consonant and eleven vowel signs.

5. Consonants: --

က, ခ, ဂ, ဃ, င,

စ, ဇ, ဆ, ရှ,

တ, ထ, ဒ, န,

ပ, ဖ, ဘ, မ,

ယ, ရ, လ, ဝ,

၁, ဟ, ဇ, ပျ,

6. Pronunciation.

With the exception of the following, the consonants are pronounced as in Burmese: --

ဂ is the uvular R the Northumbrian burr. ဃ is the above preceded by the velar fricative Ch heard in Scotch loch. When ဃ is combined with ဝ the ဂ sound is dropped and only Ch is heard.

ရ is the trilled R

ဝ is the Burmese ဘ

ဧ is voiced H

ယ is pronounced by D.P. as ယ

7. Combination of consonants.

ယ, ရ, လ, ဝ, may be combined with other consonants as follows: --

က₂ / က / ယ / kya

ကြ / က / ရ / kra

ကျ / က / လ / kla

ကွ / က / ဝ / kwa

8. The eleven vowel signs are: --

အ, အါ, အံ, အ့, အဲ, အ့

အိ, အု, အူ, အို, အီ

9. a is the indeterminate vowel as a in above

a^1 back open vowel as a in father

a^0 front close vowel as ea in eat

a^2 front middle vowel as a in late

a^{e} diphthong ai as in aisle

a^{u} mixed half-open vowel as i in bird

a^{i} spread close vowel

a^{r} round, close, front vowel as u French du

a^{ll} close, back vowel as oo in pool

a^{oo} half-close, back vowel

a^{ow} diphthong a u as ow in how

10. Nasalisation of the vowels is indicated by the sign [◌̃] which in combination with a tone-sign is reduced to one dot below the tone-sign:

e.g., ◌̃, ◌̃, ◌̃

11. a^{oo} is scarcely distinguishable from a^{ll} e.g., a^{oo} is pronounced amu and a^{ll} padu.

12. The value of a^{r} in certain combination is so near to a^{oo} that the foreign ear finds it difficult to detect the difference.

13. The sound a^{i} lies between a^{u} and a^{r} and is known by the phonetic sign uu@. When in combination with ◌̃ it is not distinguishable from a^{r} e.g. a^{i} & a^{r} are pronounced alike.

14. Tones.

Tones are certain modifications of the sound values of the words of isolating languages corresponding to the inflections of agglutinative languages. These modifications are of a composite character and may affect at one and the same time the pitch, duration and modulation of the sounds. A tone may therefore be described as to its pitch, whether high or low; its duration, whether long or short; and its modulation, whether rising, level or falling.

Six different tones are indicated in Pwo Karen script but as the language is pronounced by D.P. there are now only four tones. The terms used by the Karens to differentiate the various tones, indicate the nature of the sign used to denote them and provide no clue as to their pronunciation. It is better to use a nomenclature which refers to the sound rather than to the sign; and so, in the schedule below, the tones are designated by terms which refer to their most conspicuous sound characteristics.

15. i. The high tone.

This is the tone implied when no tone-sign is used:

high pitch, short duration, rising modulation

ii. The middle tone ๐๒

middle pitch, long duration, level modulation

iii. The low tone ๐J or ๐1

low pitch, short duration, falling modulation.

iv. The checked tone ๐L or ๐s

high pitch, short duration, modulation cut out by glottal check.

N.B. The indeterminate vowel, although it is not followed by a tone-sign, is a variation of the middle tone but with shorter duration.

16. When the tone-signs follow ၵ the ၵ is omitted and understood; this is the case also when ၵ is followed by the sign [◌း] indicating nasalisation. e.g. မၵ်း is written မး.

17. Sound-shiftings between Pwo and Sgaw.

The Pwo and Sgaw dialects are very closely allied and in a large number of cases the vocabulary is identical except for slight modifications. These modifications of vowel, consonant and tone obey certain laws which may be compared with those which govern the Aryan languages as expressed in Grimm's law.

18. The following general principles may be laid down with regard to the relationship existing between cognate Pwo and Sgaw words:

(a) Pwo has aspirated where Sgaw has the corresponding unaspirated consonants: --

Pwo ခၵ် break / Sgaw ကပ်

Pwo ထံး bridge / Sgaw တံး

Pwo ဖျၵ် arrow / Sgaw ပျၵ်

(b) Breathed consonants in Pwo are replaced by the corresponding voiced consonants in Sgaw: --

Pwo ထဲး branch / Sgaw ဒဲး

Pwo ဖျၵ် smooth / Sgaw ဘျၵ်

(c) Occasionally the reverse is the case: --

Pwo ဒၵ် see / Sgaw ထံး

(d) The formative affix is often omitted in Pwo: --

Pwo နံး bee / Sgaw ကံး

Pwo မုၵ်း maiden / Sgaw မုၵ်းကံး

Pwo ခံး mango / Sgaw သံး

(e) Pwo ယ corresponds with Sgaw ည : --

Pwo ယၢ before / Sgaw ညါ

Pwo ယီၤ easy / Sgaw ညီ

Pwo ယၢၣ် mercy / Sgaw သးကညီၤ

(f) Pwo ရှ or ဖ corresponds with Sgaw ပု, ဖု, စု, ဆု : --

Pwo ရှါ old / Sgaw ပုၢ်

Pwo ဖွဲ buy / Sgaw ပုၤ

Pwo ဖုံ sow / Sgaw ဖုံ

Pwo ရှဲ few / Sgaw စုၤ

Pwo ဖုံ clean / Sgaw ဆုံ

(g) Pwo nasalised ိ corresponds with Sgaw အိ : --

Pwo ခု foot / Sgaw ခိၣ်

(h) Other nasal vowels in Pwo are represented in Sgaw by the corresponding pure vowels: --

Pwo ဖၢၣ် heavy / Sgaw ဃါ

(i) The middle, low and checked tones are usually consonant: --

Pwo မုး rice / Sgaw မုၤ

Pwo ယၣ် fish / Sgaw ညုၣ်

Pwo ဘး itch / Sgaw သး

(j) The high tone in Pwo sometimes corresponds with the low tone in Sgaw: --

Pwo ယါ sail / Sgaw ယၢ်

(k) The low tone in Pwo sometimes corresponds with the high tone in Sgaw: --

Pwo မၢ wife / Sgaw မါ

19. Pronunciation is the same as in English.

20. Figures are the same as in Burmese.

The Structure of the Sentence.

21. The order of words in Karen may be illustrated by the following simple sentence: စာ့ဒုညုဂံလီၤ. S' Bwa builds a house, စာ့ဒု S' Bwa, subject; ညု builds, predicate, ဂံ house, object; လီၤ a particle used to mark the close of a declarative sentence.

A Karen sentence, therefore, resembles an English sentence in two particulars.

- (1) The order of words is: subject, predicate, object.
- (2) The subject and object are recognized by their position in the sentence.

22. Modifiers may be added to the above sentence as follows: လဘုဒုဘုဒု စာ့ဒု ဘရၢ်နီၤ ညုထု ဂံ ချဲးချဲးလီၤ. sometimes, old S' Bwa builds a house quickly, လဘုဒုဘုဒု sometimes, adverbial modifier; ဘရၢ် old, adjective modifying စာ့ဒု; နီၤ demonstrative modifying စာ့ဒု; ချဲးချဲး quickly, adverb modifying ညုထု.

In a Karen sentence, therefore: --

- (1) An adjective modifier follows the noun which it modifies.
- (2) An adverbial modifier stands after the verb and its object, if it have one; but,
- (3) An adverbial modifier denoting time may stand at the beginning of the sentence.

Parts of Speech.

23. The Karen language has the nine following parts of speech; nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and particles.

24. But it must be understood that the distinction between the different parts of speech is by no means so sharply defined in Karen as in English. The same word will appear now as this, and now as that part of speech, according to the office it performs in its sentence.

Thus in the phrase ကံ့အိၣ်, a big house, အိၣ် appears as an adjective; in ကံ့အိၣ်ဝဲ, the house is big, အိၣ် appears as a verb; in ကံ့အဆၢအိၣ်, the bigness of the house, အိၣ် forms a noun.

25. Among the most striking peculiarities of the Karen language are its paired words, or couplets. Sometimes two words of analogous signification are united to form a word of slightly different meaning from either; sometimes the couplet consists of two synonymous words; sometimes it consists of a significant root which, out of the couplet, has no meaning. Couplets are found among nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

26-27. A proper noun is usually preceded by the name of the class to which the individual belongs; ခးဒိၣ်ဝဲ Burma, (ခး meaning country;) ဝဲတခိၣ် Rangoon (ဝဲ meaning city.) Names of men are preceded by the particle စ; e.g. စၣ်ယိၣ် S' Shwe Young. Names of women are preceded by the article နး e.g. နးအိၣ်ဝဲ Nan Aung Pyu.

28-30. Common nouns may be derived from: --

- (1) Verbal roots.
- (2) Adjective roots.
- (3) Other noun roots.

31. Nouns are formed from verbal roots in the following ways: --

- (1) Abstract nouns of action are formed: --
 - (a) By prefixing the particle ဆဲး to the verbal root; e.g. from the root လဲး, to go, is formed the noun ဆဲးလဲး going, journey.
 - (b) By simply using the verbal root as a noun, qualifying it by a demonstrative adjective;

e.g. နှစ်ဆယ့်နှစ် ယနာညအလ. I don't understand what you say.

(2) Nouns of agency are formed by prefixing ပု person, to the verb, and at the same time affixing ဖိ; e.g. ပုလုလုဆိ a traveller, sometimes the affix ဖိ is omitted.

(3) Instrumental nouns are formed by prefixing နိ to the verbal root; e.g. os, to shake, နိဝos a pudding stick.

(4) Nouns denoting where an action takes place are formed by prefixing လး, place, to the verbal root; e.g. မံ, to sleep; လးမံ, a bed.

32. Abstract nouns of quality are formed by prefixing to the adjectival root the particle ဆိ; e.g. ဒိ, great; ဆိဒိ, greatness.

33. Nouns are formed from other noun roots in the following ways: --

(1) Diminutives are formed by adding ဖိ, young, little, to the noun root; e.g. ထုံ a dog; ထုံဖိ, a little dog, a puppy.

(2) Gentile nouns, and all nouns expressing residence, are formed by affixing ဖိ to the name of the place, e.g. ဝံ, city; ဝံဖိ, citizens. The particle ပု is generally prefixed as well. e.g. ဒိဂံ, Burma, ပုဒိဂံဖိ Burmans.

(3) Two or more noun roots may be combined; e.g. ထံချိ river, ဆုလုခိ knee.

34. Noun couplets are formed by the combination of two noun roots, each of which is generally followed or preceded by a particle, which serves to connect them: e.g. ထိံသံလံသံ, or ထိံဖိလံသံ, birds, ဆိခိဆိတံ, grace, ဆိဂုဆိဘွံ, goodness, ပထံပခံ my country, နဖိနလံ your descendents, အဂံအဟံ, his buildings. In the last three examples the connecting particle is a personal pronoun in the possessive case.

Gender.

35–38. The Karen language recognizes only natural gender.

39. The gender of indeterminate nouns may be distinguished by the following affixes: ပုခွံ or ခွံ masculine, applied to human beings.

ပုမု or မု feminine, applied to human beings.

ဖာ masculine, applied to animals.

မိ feminine, applied to animals.

e.g. ဖိာာ child, ဖိာာအခွံ boy, ဖိာာအမု girl,
ကဲာ horse, ကဲာဖာ stallion, ကဲာမိ mare.

Number.

40. Karen nouns convey of themselves no idea of number; e.g. the noun ဂံ့ may mean house or houses. The number is often left to be inferred from the context. When, however, it is desired definitely to mark the number, this can be done.

41. The singular is denoted by the numeral, က or လ; e.g. ဂံ့ကဖျိာ, ဂံ့လဖျိာ.

42. The plural may be noted in the following ways: --

(1) By the use of a numeral adjective;

e.g. ဂံ့နီဖျိာ two houses, ဂံ့အာဖျိာ many houses.

(2) By any one of the following affixes လဖာ, the usual affix;

e.g. ဂံ့လဖာ houses. ခံ used with the vocative, or with pronouns;

e.g. ထာဖုဝဲခံ, brethren.

အဝါခံ they

ခံလဖာ used principally with pronouns; e.g. အဝါခံလဖာ they.

(3) The plural, when used to convey the idea of generality is often expressed by a couplet; e.g. ဂံ့ခံဖာခံ, houses or buildings in general.

43-44. With regard to case, the "absolute case" alone calls for remark as being peculiar to Karen. Its function is to name prominently at the beginning of the sentence, and thus to emphasize the person or thing about which some statement is made in the remainder of the sentence ကံ့ကဖျိနီယ ယဗ္ဗုယုယု.
I have bought that house.

45. In Karen, as in English, the case of the noun is indicated, not by inflection, but by the position of the word in the sentence. Where this is not sufficient, recourse is had to particles.

46. Regularly, the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows it; e.g. စဘွေသုဂံလီ, S' Bwa builds a house, စဘွေ the subject, precedes the verb, သု; and ဂံ့ the object, follows it.

47. Karen nouns, like English nouns, are often governed by prepositions; e.g. ယလုးစိးလၢဝံးတခိး I am going to Rangoon. Here ဝံးတခိး is governed by the preposition စိးလၢ. Nouns follow the preposition by which they are governed. (N.B. စိး is often omitted e.g. ယလုးလၢဝံးတခိး.)

48. Where in English a verb has two objects, or one direct and one indirect object, the Karen may place either one as the direct object of the verb, and the other will then be governed by the preposition လၢ; e.g. where the English says, I give S' Bwa a book, the Karen may say, ယ ဖုၤ စဘွေ လၢလံလေဘံ့ or ယ ဖုၤ လံလေဘံ့ လၢစဘွေလီၤ.

49. In Karen, verbal nouns as well as verbs may take objects; e.g. ဆၢအဲၤနး love (for) you.

50. A noun in the possessive construction is joined to the name of the thing possessed by the particle အ; e.g. စဘွေအဂံ့ S' Bwa's house.

51. A noun in the vocative case is followed by the particle ဧ,

e.g. စဘွေးဧ S' Bwa.

(N.B. D.P. pronounce ဧ, as ဂံး.)

52. Substantives in the absolute construction stand first in the sentence, free of all grammatical relation thereto, and are usually followed by the

demonstrative adjective, ယိး or နီ; e.g. ဂံးအဝံးနီ စဘွေး ညုထံ့ဝံးလီ, that house,

S' Bwa built it. Here ဂံး is in the absolute construction, followed by နီ,

that. Occasionally the particle ဘိ takes the place of the particle ယိး or နီ;

more commonly it follows one of them, e.g. ဂံးအဝံးနီဘိ, စဘွေး ညုထံ့ဝံးလီ.

Pronouns.

53. Karen Pronouns are principally Personal, though Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns exist.

54. There are no Relative Pronouns in Karen. Relative clauses are common; but they are connected with the nouns which they modify by means of the conjunction လဲ, the pronouns used being personal pronouns of the third person.

Personal pronouns.

55. In Karen, as in English, the personal pronouns are declined, the cases being marked by case forms. The following tables exhibit the three personal pronouns in their various numbers and cases.

Gender is not distinguished.

Singular / Plural

(First Person)

Nom. ဝ / ဝ

Poss. ဝ / ဝ

Obj. ဝး [pronounced ဝး by D.P.] / ဝး [pronounced ဝး by D.P.]

(Second Person)

Nom. န / နံၤ

Poss. န / နံၤ

Obj. နဲ [D.P pronounce it နဲ] / နံၤ

(Third Person)

Nom. အဝံၤ / အဝံၤၤ

Poss. အဝံၤအ / အဝံၤၤအ

Obj. အဝံၤ / အဝံၤၤ

56-57. After the verb မဲ, to be, the objective forms of the personal pronouns are used instead of nominative forms; e.g. မဲယးလီၤ. (not မဲယလီၤ.) it is I.

58. Besides the regular pronouns, Karen possesses a pronominal affix ဝံၤ.

This is affixed to verbs in the third person, particularly in subordinate clauses. It is also affixed to pronouns of all persons in forming compounds.

When ဝံၤ follow a verb it is never an object; e.g. ဂံၤလၢၤစမ္ဗးသ့ဝံၤနီၤ, နဒၤၤ the house which S' Myat built, have you seen it? There ဝံၤ refers to the subject, S' Myat, and not to the object, ဂံၤ. In this construction ဝံၤၤ is often used like ဝံၤ.

59-61. The simple forms tabulated under [55](#) form a base from which a number of pronominal forms are built up, by means of the particles ဝံၤ and ဒၤ, the word နါဆါ, self, and the demonstrative adjectives, ယံး this, and နီၤ that. Such forms are generally self-explanatory. Their cases are indicated like those of nouns. The more common forms are noted below.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယဝံၤၤ, ယဝံၤ / ပဝံၤၤ, ပဝံၤ

2nd Pers. နဝံၤၤ, နဝံၤ / နံၤဝံၤၤ, နံၤဝံၤ

3rd Pers. အဝံၤ, အဝံၤၤ / အဝံၤၤၤ, အဝံၤၤၤလၢၤ

[ယဝံၤၤ and နဝံၤၤ are the forms used colloquially.]

62. The absolute forms of the pronoun (like the absolute form of the noun) are generally followed by one of the demonstrative adjectives ယီး and နီ and sometimes by the particle ဘီ; e.g. ယူဒယယီး, အဝံဒနီ, နွဒဘီ.

63. In the absolute forms, ဒ is often omitted.

e.g. ယူ, ယလုဒဒအု, as for me, I cannot go.

64. In the first and second persons, the objective form often takes the place of the proper absolute form.

e.g. ယဒ, ယကဘလုလီ. As for me, I shall have to go.

65. The use of the absolute form is illustrated in the following sentences;

နဝဒယီး နလုဒဒအု, as for you, you cannot go.

အဝံဒနီ အဂံအိလဝံတခိအဖဒလီ as for them, their house is in Rangoon.

Intensive Pronouns.

66. Intensive forms of the personal pronouns are formed by adding to the possessive case the word နုဆိ, self, and the particle ဝဒ. They are as follows.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယနုဆိဒယဝ / ပနုဆိဒပဝ.

2nd Pers. နနုဆိဒနဝ / နံအနုဆိဒပဝ.

3rd Pers. အနုဆိဒပဝ / အဝံအနုဆိဒပဝ, အနုဆိဝံဒပဝ.

67. The forms are used in apposition with a substantive, for emphasis.

e.g. စထိအနုဆိဒပဝကလုလီ, S' Tun himself will go.

ယကလုယနုဆိဒယဝလီ. I will go myself.

68. The same thing may be indicated by affixing the forms ဒယဝ, ဒပဝ etc. to the verb. e.g. နံကလုဒနံပဝလီ. you will go yourselves.

69. The forms mentioned in 68, affixed to nouns which follow a substantive in the possessive, convey the same idea as the English word own; e.g. ယလံဒေယဝှာ, ယလံဒေယှာ my own book.

Reflexive Pronouns.

70. Reflexive forms of the personal pronouns are made by affixing to the possessive case the word ဘ် self. They are as follows.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယဘ် / ယဘ်

2nd Pers. နဘ် / နဘ်အဘ်

3rd Pers. အဘ် / အဘ်

71. These forms are used as the objects of the verbs, when the person affected by the action is the same as the person performing it; e.g. စမ္ပုဆုလုအဘ်လီ, S' Myat stabs himself. These forms always appear as direct objectives, while the intensive forms previously described are generally used in apposition. An intensive pronoun, however, sometimes takes the place of a proper reflexive.

72. The pronoun အ may also be classed among the reflexives. It takes the place of the personal pronoun of the third person in indirect discourse, referring to the speaker;

e.g. ယမိခွာစံလအကလုလီ, my son says that he (son) will go.

Possessive Pronouns.

73. The possessive pronouns mine, thine, etc. are formed by affixing ဝှာ or ဆာ to the possessive forms of the personal pronouns;

e.g. လံနီမဲ့ယဝှာလီ, လံနီမဲ့ယဆာလီ, that book is mine.

74. ဝှာ and ဆာ may be similarly used with nouns in the possessive case;

e.g. လံနီမဲ့စမ္ပုဝှာလီ or လံနီမဲ့စမ္ပုအဆာလီ, that book is S' Myat's.

Demonstrative Pronouns.

75. Properly speaking, the Karen language has no demonstrative pronouns. Their place is supplied, however, by combining the demonstrative adjectives ယီ, this and နီ, that, with the personal pronoun of the third person. အဝုယီ this, အဝုနီ that.

Interrogative Pronouns.

76. The Interrogative adjectives described in [101](#) and [102](#), are used also as interrogative pronouns; e.g. အဝုမဆနီလဲ what is he doing?
နဒပလလကလဲ whom do you see?
ဂံနီဖျိနီ နအဲဒိထဖျိလဲ, which of the two houses do you like?

77. The interrogative possessive pronoun, whose, is formed by affixing ဝု or အဆ to the interrogative pronoun ပလ; e.g. လံအဝုယီမဲ့ပလဝုလဲ; လံအဝုယီမဲ့ပလအဆလဲ whose is this book?

Indefinite Pronouns

78. ဆ is used as the subject of impersonal verbs; e.g. ဆဂဲဆလီ, it rains.

79. ပု or ဆ is often used as an indefinite subject to a verb in the third person singular, when we do not know, or do not wish to express, the subject of the verb; e.g. ဆ (or ပု) ဒိဝုလီ, somebody beat him.

80. ပု is often used indefinitely in the objective case to express people in general.

81-82. ဆ is used as an indefinite object to verbs which require one but to which no definite object can be assigned; e.g. ယဒဆလီ, I see, literally, I see things.

83. Many of the indefinite adjectives described under [99](#) are also used as indefinite pronouns;

e.g. နအံ့အာယာတေ, ပွဲနယာန နးဘံ့ဆံး, if you see any fish, buy me one.

Adjective.

84. Most of the roots which in English would be regarded as essentially adjectival in their signification, are in Karen considered as verbs. Under this head come all the roots expressive of quality; e.g. the root ဂု, expressive of goodness, means, not good, but to be good. So with many roots expressive of quantity; e.g. ဒိ means, not great, but to be great. And such words are constantly used as verbs, the verbal meaning being the primitive one.

Adjectives of Quality.

85. Adjectives of quality are generally adjective (relative) clauses in an abbreviated form. "A good man" would originally be expressed by ပုလအဂု, a man that is good. But it is commonly expressed in an abbreviated form, ပုအဂု, the relative conjunction, လ, being omitted. It is sometimes still further abbreviated by omitting the pronoun အ, when it would stand simply ပုဂု, ပုရဂု.

Adjectives of Quantity

86-87. Some adjectives expressive of magnitude are formed by prefixing the particle ဖ (very) to verbal roots. Such adjectives immediately follow the nouns which they modify; e.g. ပုရဖဒိ a great man.

Numeral Adjectives.

88. The following are the cardinal numerals.

၁ လံ, ၂ နံ, ၃ ဘံ, ၄ လံ, ၅ ယံ, ၆ ဟံ, ၇ နံ, ၈ ပံ, ၉ ခံ, ၁၀ ကဆံ,
၁၁ ကဆံလံ, ၁၀၀ ကယံ, ၁၀၀၀ ကထီ, ၁၀၀၀၀ ကလံ,
၁၀၀,၀၀၀ ကကံ, ၁,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ ကခံ, ၁၀,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ ကဘံ.

89. A numeral adjective almost invariably follows the noun which it modifies, and is itself followed by an auxiliary word expressing some quality of the noun to which it refers; e.g. ပုရှယဲဝဲ, five men. ဝဲ is the numeral adjunct used in speaking of rational beings. ပနီၤသ့ဒဲး three buffaloes. ဒဲး is the numeral adjunct used in speaking of quadrupeds.

90. Numeral Adjuncts.

ကဲၤ the bend of a river ထံၤချီၤကဲၤ or ထံၤကဲၤ

ကဲး a strip of bamboo or wood ဝၢကဲး, ဝံၤကဲး

ကုၤ a piece of bamboo or wood ဝၢကုၤ, ဝံၤကုၤ

ခဲၤ a burnt stick ဝံၤမုကဲၤ

ခု (1) a stick နီၤခုကုၤ (2) a petticoat နီၤကုၤ

ခိၤ couples, pairs, guns, carts, ပနီၤကိၤ a yoke of buffaloes, ကျီၤကိၤ a gun.

လဲၤကိၤ a cart.

ခါ sides of things ခုနီၤခါ two feet

ချး coils ဂုကချး, ဖျိးကချး

ခွဲ garlands ဖီၤကခွဲ

ဝဲ rational beings ပုရှသ့ဝဲ

ဂိၤ a portion of kauk hnyin မုးအဲၤကိၤ

ဂိၤ two handfuls ဘုၤကဂိၤ, ဂုၤဆၢကဂိၤ

စုၤ one handful ဘုၤကစုၤ, ဂုၤဆၢကစုၤ

ဆၢ stories, flats ကဆၢနီၤဆၢ

ဆဲး ears of paddy ဘုၤကဆဲး

ဆၢ verses လံၤကဆၢနီၤဆၢ

ဆိး races, nations ပုရှကဆိး

တၢ baskets ဘုၤကတၢ

ထံၤ words ဆၢချဲၤကထံၤ

ထံၤ trees ဝံၤကထံၤ

ထုၤ posts, trees ဝံၤကထုၤ

ထု bundles ဝၢကထု

ထူၤ rolls ချီၤကထူၤ

ဒဲး tides ထံၤကဒဲး

ဒုး quadrupeds ထုံနံဒုး
 ဒိုး bees, nests နံကဒိုး, ထိအဝံကဒိုး
 ဒိုး group of persons ဂံဖိကဒိုး
 ပိုး heaps လီခဲကပိုး
 ဖး flowers ဖိဆာဆူနံဖး
 ဖး openings ပဲတရဲဘးဖး
 ဖု felled trees ဝံကဖု
 ဖျိုး spherical or approximately spherical objects
 (လံမိဘကဖျိုး, ဂံကဖျိုး, ချံကဖျိုး, ကဘဲကဖျိုး, လးဆးနဲကဖျိုး)
 တံ (1) flat things ယကတံ/လံကတံ (2) fowls etc. ထိကတံ one bird
 တီး cylindrical ဂုကတီး
 မံ a thing ဆကမံနံမံ
 မိုး words ဆးချဲကမိုး
 ယ်း T.P. ယှ D.P songs and poems ဆးအံလယ်, ဆးအံလယှ
 လး places ဆံကလး, ပုကလး

91. There are a number of words denoting portions, quantities or collections, which are used in a similar manner to the numeral auxiliaries;
 e.g. ထံကကံး a drink of water, မုးကစူ a handful of sand.

92. When there is no numeral adjunct proper to a noun, and sometimes even when there is a numeral which might be used, the noun itself is repeated after the numeral; ဝံးကဝံး a city, ခးကခး a country, ဂံကဂံ a house.

93. Sometimes there is a choice of numeral adjuncts for the same noun;
 e.g. မုးလတီ, မုးလဖျိုး an eye.

94. Numerals are sometimes prefixed to the nouns which they modify;
 e.g. ကဝံးဘကဝံး from town to town, ယဲနဲဃးနဲ five or six days.

95. The numeral adjuncts regularly follow the numerals with which they stand. But when the numeral is ten or a multiple of ten, the adjunct precedes the numeral, and is itself preceded by the particle အ;

e.g. ပုရှ်အက နံဆံၤ twenty men.

96-97. The formation of the ordinal numerals will easily be understood from the following examples.

အဆုထံၣ် ကက the first (man) / အဆုထံၣ် means beginning

အဆုထံၣ် ကမံး the first (thing)

နံၤက ကက the second (man)

သၤမံး ကမံး the third (thing)

လံးဒဲး ကဒဲး the fourth (quadruped)

98. Multiplicatives are formed by affixing စ to the cardinal numerals;

e.g. သၤစ threefold.

Indefinite Adjectives.

99. The numeral adjuncts form the basis of a number of common idioms expressing ideas of number or quantity.

(1) Certain indefinite numeral adjectives are combined with the numeral auxiliaries, in the same manner as the cardinal numerals. These are အ many, ရှဲ few, and တဘျီ several

e.g. မိၤသၤခွၢအက many boys, မိၤသၤမုၢရှဲက few girls, ပုရှ်တဘျီက several men.

(2) The numeral က or လ one, with an appropriate numeral, often has the sense of the English indefinite article, e.g. ချံၤကဖျိံ a boat.

(3) The numeral က or လ one, with a reduplicated numeral is used in referring indefinitely to a person or thing; e.g. ပုမုၢကက some woman, ဆၢကဘံၣ်ဘံၣ် some fowl.

- (4) The indefinite adjective of quantity, ကန့် or လန့်, some, is formed from the numeral က or လ by means of the particle န့်.
- (5) The reduplicated form ကန့်န့် or လန့်န့် is used in referring indefinitely to more than one person or thing;
ပုဂ္ဂိုလ် ကန့်န့် some men, ခဲတၢ် ကန့်န့် some pencils.
- (6) In a similar way are formed
ကဆံ or လဆံ, ကဆံဆံ or လဆံဆံ, a little.
- (7) Universality is expressed by placing a numeral auxiliary between က or လ and လါလါ; e.g. ကမံလါလါ every thing.
- (8) The same idea is expressed by placing a numeral auxiliary between ကံ and ဒု; e.g. ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ကံဒု every man.
- (9) Completeness is expressed by placing a numeral adjunct between ထၢ and ယၢ; e.g. ဝံထၢဖျိယၢ the whole city.
- (10) A complete number may be expressed by affixing လူ or ယၢ, to any one of the ordinal numerals; e.g. ဘၣ်မံလူ, ဘၣ်မံယၢ all three (things)
- (11) Singularity is expressed by placing the numeral က or လ with the suitable adjunct between နံ and လီၤ; e.g. နံကလီၤ only one (man)
- (12) Identity is expressed by placing the numeral adjunct between က or လ and ဃး, e.g. ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ကလံး the same man.
- (13) Utter non-existence of a thing is expressed by introducing a numeral auxiliary between နး and အံ, e.g. ထံ့အံးနးဒုအံ there is not a single dog.

100. Certain other indefinite adjectives of quantity are formed independently of the numeral system. Such are ထီးလူ or ထီးအလူ, ထီးလူထီးဆံ့ or ထီးအလူအဆံ့ all, which follow their nouns;

e.g. ပုရှ်ထီးလူ or ပုရှ်ထီးအလူ all men. ထီးဒု whoever, or whatever, which precedes its noun; e.g. ထီးဒုပုရှ် whatever man.

Interrogative Adjectives.

101. The common interrogatives are ပလာကက or လက referring to persons, and ဆနီလမံ့ referring to things;

e.g. နဂဲလဆရာပလာလကလဲ with what teacher did you come?

နအဲဒိအံ့ ဆနီအံ့ လမံ့လဲ what fruit do you want to eat?

After ဆနီ, လမံ့ may be omitted, in which case the construction would be နအဲဒိအံ့ဆနီ ဘလဲ.

102. An interrogative with a selective force is formed by prefixing စ to the appropriate numeral adjunct;

e.g. နအဲဒိဒီထဘံ့ဘံ့လဲ which knife do you want?

103. Interrogative adjectives of quantity are made by prefixing ဆံ to the indefinite adjectives of quantity; e.g. ဆံဒိ how great, ဆံအံ how much, how many. နဘုအံ ဆံအံလဲ how much paddy have you? These are used

both in direct and indirect discourse. In indirect discourse they sometimes suffer reduplication; e.g. နစုအံ ဆံအံဆံအံလဲနီ ယဘုယအံ, I do not know how much money you have.

104. Interrogative adjectives of number may be formed by prefixing ပ္ဍ to the numeral adjunct; e.g. နလံအံ ပ္ဍဘံ့လဲ how many books have you? These also may be used in indirect discourse.

105–108. The Karen language has two definite demonstrative adjectives, ယီး, အယီး this, and နီၤ, အနီၤ that. They may modify the substantive element, be it noun, pronoun, phrase or clause. နီၤ is used to mark the end of a noun clause, or of a series of adjectival modifiers of a noun; e.g. ပုမုၤသးၣ်ၤအဂုၤလၢအအီၤဝုၤ လၢဂံၤဖးၣ် လၢဂးနီၤ, မွဲယမိလီၤ, the good old woman who lives in the house is my mother.

Adjectival Couplets.

109. Adjectival couplets are affixed to the nouns which they modify. Such a couplet consists of two adjectival roots, each of which is preceded by the particle အ. e.g. ပုၣ်ၤအဂုၤအဘွၢ် a good man.

Comparison of Adjectives.

110–111. The comparative degree is expressed by affixing နဲၣ် to the adjective, e.g. ဘွၢ် white, ဘွၢ်နဲၣ် whiter.

112. The superlative degree is formed by affixing ထုၤ to the adjective ဘွၢ်ထုၤ whitest.

Verbs.

113. Karen verbs express actions, states, or qualities; e.g. လဲၣ် to go, အီၤ to be, ဂုၤ to be good.

114. Karen verbs may be divided into transitive and intransitive verbs. Many verbs which in English are regarded as intransitive, in Karen are regarded as transitive and take an object; e.g. the verb လဲၣ် to go, is often used with the object ဆၢ.

115. In Karen, a verb which can take an object generally does take one. When no definite object can be assigned, the indefinite object ဆၢ is frequently used; e.g. ယဒၣ်ဆၢ I see. See [81–82](#).

116. Karen verbs have no inflections, properly so called. The accidents of voice, mood, tense, person, and number, are expressed by particles connected with the verb, or are left to be inferred from the subject.

Voice.

117. Three voices may be recognized in Karen; active, passive, and middle.

118. The verb in its simple and primitive form is in the active voice; e.g. in the sentence ယဒၣအဝူၤလီၤ, I see him, ဒၣ is in the active voice.

119–121. The formation of the passive voice is peculiar. A few examples will make it clearer than any explanation.

The following sentences exhibit the passive of the verb ခိၣ, to strike. ယဘၣဆၢဒိၣယၣလီၤ, I am struck. အဝူၤဘၣဆၢဒိၣဝူၤလီၤ, he is struck.

122. When it is desired to convey the idea that the subject voluntarily submits to an action, the passive voice is differently expressed. In this case, the verbal root is preceded by ခိၣs or ထိး and followed by a reflexive pronoun; e.g. အဝူၤခိၣဒိၣအဝူၤ he is beaten, he permits himself to be beaten. စမ့ထိးဒိၣအဝူၤ, S' Myat is beaten, submits to being beaten.

123. Closely allied to this second form of the passive voice is a form used to convey the idea that a thing is in a certain state as the result of an action which has been performed upon it. e.g. ဆၢက့ၣအဝူၤ It is written.

124. The middle voice expresses the idea that the subject performs an action upon himself. To express this the active form of the verb is followed by the particle လဲၣ, and a reflexive pronoun; e.g. ယဒၣလဲၣယၣလီၤ, I see myself.

Mood.

125. There are only two moods in Karen, the indicative and the imperative.

126. The primitive form of the verb is indicative.

127. The primitive form of the verb may be used in the imperative;
e.g. လှဲ, go!

128. When a verb is in the imperative mood the sentence (if expressing a command) commonly ends with the particle ဆံ
e.g. လှဲလှဲအဝူအဆံ, go to him!

129. The particle လါ is sometimes affixed to the verb in an imperative sentence where the idea is that of entreating a superior;
e.g. ဆိဂုလါပဆံ, bless us.

130. In giving permission, ကဒ or ဘိ sometimes takes the place of ဆံ,
e.g. လှဲကဒ, လှဲဘိ go.

131. A sentence expressing a prohibition ends in လှဲ;
e.g. လှဲလှဲ do not go. In such cases the verb may be preceded by နံ and the negative particle ထိ; e.g. နံထိလှဲလှဲ, do not go.

132. A precative sentence is introduced by the particle မွဲ and otherwise has the form of a sentence expressing command or prohibition;
e.g. မွဲပဆံ, let us do it. မွဲပထိလှဲလှဲ let us not do it.

Tense.

133. The verb standing by itself conveys no idea of time. It may refer to past or present time according to the context;
e.g. ယဆးန့လီ may mean I sit, I am sitting or I sat.

134. An action the performance of which is contemplated, is expressed by prefixing the particle က or မိ to the verb. This form is commonly used to express a future action; e.g. ယကလွဲ, ယမိလွဲ I shall go, I will go.

135. The idea of intention or desire is brought but more strongly by prefixing မိ to the verb;
e.g. စမ္ပမိလွဲလီၤ, S' Myat desires to go, intends to go.

136. Completed action is indicated by affixing the particle ယှ to the verb,
e.g. ယဂဲၤယှ I have come.

137. The same idea is more emphatically expressed by introducing ဂိး before ယှ; e.g. ယဒဂိးယှ, I had seen it.

138. The Karens sometimes use both က and ယှ with the same verb to express an intention to perform an action immediately;
e.g. ယကလွဲယှ I should have gone.

139. To mark the completion of an action previous to a certain moment of past time, ဝဲ is affixed to the verb, and is often followed by ယှ;
e.g. ယလချုးလွဲဒံးဘၢနီၤ အဝဲၤလွဲဝဲယှ, before I came he had gone.
This usage is analogous to the English pluperfect.

140. An action dependent upon a supposed condition contrary to fact is sometimes expressed by prefixing က to the root and affixing ယှ or ဝဲယှ;
e.g. နအံၤလဲၤဘၢတၢ် ယကလွဲဝဲယှလီၤ if you had not come I should have gone by this time.

Person and Number.

141. The person and number of the verb are to be inferred from those of the subject, but a verb in the third person sometimes takes ဝဲ after it;
e.g. ပုဒိၤဖၢဒိၤ လွဲဝဲလီၤ the governor goes.

Compound verbs.

142. Besides the simple verbs, each of which consists as a rule of a single syllable, there are compound verbs formed by combining simple verbs with particles, or with other verbs.

143. A verbal couplet is formed by two verbal roots, each of which is followed by a particle; e.g. ဆူထဲနဲ့ထဲနဲ့ to believe. ဒိပ်ထွေထွေ to grow up. ဆံလဲလဲလဲ to decrease. လီဘာလဘာ to tell. ဆံဂုဏ်ဂုဏ် to be holy.

144. The Karen language possesses a number of particles which are combined with simple verbs to make new verbs of kindred signification. Many of these particles were originally verbal roots, and are sometimes used as verbs; but in the connection under discussion they are to be considered as particles.

145. The following particles are prefixed to the verb: --

ကျဲနဲ့ denotes a representing of the action as if done, often only in appearance; e.g. ကျဲနဲ့နဲ့ to assume the appearance of laughing.

ထိပ် prefixed to a few verbs, has a causative force; e.g. ထိပ်ဂုဏ် to wake up.

ဒု has a permissive or causative force; e.g. ဒုလဲလဲ to send.

ဖု has a permissive or causative force; e.g. ဖုအာထွေ to increase (transitive)

ဘိပ် prefixed to a few verbs, has a causative force; e.g. ဘိပ်ဘာဂုဏ် inform.

မဲ has a causative force, မဲသံ to kill.

လဲ indicates the subject falls into the state indicated by the verb; e.g. လဲလဲလဲ to become tired.

လဲ has also a causative force; e.g. လဲနံ to make one laugh.

ဝါ prefixed to verbs with the negative, indicates that the act is performed imperfectly or in a slight degree; e.g. ယဉ္ဇာယဝါအံ့, I scarcely know.

146. The following particles are affixed to the verb: --

ကဒဲ has a sense of return, retaliation or opposition;

e.g. ထဲကဒဲထဲ to return.

ကဒယှ has a concessive force;

e.g. နှံဆာနီ မဲကဒယှ admitting the truth of what you say.

ခါ indicates that the act is performed by way of trial; e.g. မဲခါ to try.

ခဲ denotes that the action results in a separation; e.g. မဲနဲခဲ to take away.

ဂဲ denotes that the act is performed by way of assistance;

e.g. လဲဂဲ, to go together with one.

ဂှ denotes that the action is done carefully, or stealthily;

e.g. ယိဂှ, to watch closely.

ပဲ denotes that several persons or things act together;

e.g. မဲပဲ to work together.

ပိ denotes that several persons or things act in company;

e.g. အံ့ပိလဲမဲ to eat rice together.

ဝဲ denotes that the act is done from a distance;

e.g. ယိဝဲ to look away. ဒဲဝဲ to behold afar off.

ဆး denotes that the action is performed by way of assistance;
e.g. ယကကူဆးနား, I will help you reap.

ဆီ denotes that an act is done before some event takes place;
e.g. ယဒါဆီအဝှာအဂံ့ I saw his house first.

ရှ် denotes that the act was done unintentionally;
e.g. ကံရှ် to utter an involuntary cry;

တတ shows that the action is hastened; e.g. အတတ eat quickly.

လ denotes that the action results in making secure; e.g. မလလ to hinder.

ထ့ indicates an upward motion; e.g. လထ့ to go up.

လ့ is affixed to a few words denoting separation; e.g. လလ့ to fall off.

ထီ denotes that the action results in arriving; e.g. လထီ to arrive.

ဒါ indicates that the action results in forsaking; e.g. ဒဲဒါ to forsake.

ဒါ indicates independent action; e.g. ယကမဒါယှာ or ယဝှာ I will do it myself.

ဒါလ indicates that the subject defers some other action to perform the one indicated by the verb;
e.g. အိခိဒါလ wait a bit. ယကမဒါလ I will sleep first.

ဒါ occasionally denotes certainty;
e.g. ဆကမဒါအဘဲနီလီ, It will be sure to happen so.

န့ indicates that the action results in observing; e.g. နထ့ to remember.

န indicates that the action results in obtaining; e.g. ဒုန to find.

ဖိ indicates that the action reaches unto its object; e.g. လှဲဖိ to go unto.

ဖျိ indicates that the action results in going through;
e.g. လှဲဖျိ to go through.

ဘ indicates that the action passes over to an object;
e.g. ယကလီဘနား I will tell you.

ဘ် indicates that the action results in an ascent; e.g. ထုံဘ် to reach up.

လဲ indicates a downward motion, literal or figurative;
e.g. လဲလဲ to descend, ရှဲလဲ to decrease.

လိ indicates that the act is performed by or for imitation;
e.g. ဝိလိ to teach, မလိ to learn.

လိ indicates reciprocal action;
e.g. ပကြိအဲလိပဘလိ, we should love one another.

ဘဲ indicates an incipient action;
e.g. ထိအဝါကဲဘဲပုဒိမဒိနိ, when he had just become governor.

အ affixed to several verbs. See Dictionary Part I pages 161–164.

Dependent Verbs.

147. A verb depending on another, follows it immediately, without undergoing any change of form; e.g. အဝါကဲပုဒိမဒိနိ, he will try to do it. This is the common construction for expressing suitability, necessity; etc.

e.g. ပကြိလဲလိ, I should go, နဘလဲလိ, you must go.

148. Where in English two verbs are connected by the conjunction and, in Karen the second verb may immediately follow the first, without a conjunction; e.g. ယကလုအ့ဖို့မုလီ, I will go and cook rice.

Idioms in the Use of Verbs

149. The causative verb အ့မာ and the permissive verb ပျဲ permit the dependent verb to be preceded by a subject;

e.g. အ့အ့မာယမလီ, he caused me to do it.

ပျဲအ့လုဘိ, let him go.

The dependent verb and its subject may be regarded as a substantive clause, forming the object of the causative or permissive verb.

150. Verbs expressing ability stand at the end of the sentence (or clause) preceded by the verb expressing the act in question, with its subject and object if it have one; e.g. အ့ကွလံ့လီ, he can write. The verb and its subject may be regarded as a substantive clause forming the subject of the verb of ability.

151. The following list exhibits the common verbs of ability, with their meanings and examples of their use.

ကဲ ability, considered with reference to physical health, or inclination;

e.g. ယခဲဆဲ, ယကမကဲအဲ, my foot is sore, I cannot walk.

ကိ ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject;

e.g. ဆဲမအဲလဲ, ယမကိအဲ, there are too many, I cannot do them.

ချဲ ability, considered with reference to leisure;

e.g. ယဆဲမအဲ, ယလိကွဲချဲအဲ, I am busy, I have no time to play.

ပဲလဲ ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject; e.g.

ဆဲမအဲလဲ, ယမကဲပဲလဲအဲ, the work is too much, I cannot do it alone.

ပွဲထွ် ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject;
e.g. ဆာမအာလိၵ် ယမးပွဲထွ်အူၤ, the work is too great, I cannot do it.

န့ ability, considered with reference to effectiveness of effort; e.g.
အဝံၤအဆာမအံၤ, ယအုလံၣ်အဝံၤန့အူၤ, he has work, I cannot hire him.

ဘၤ ability, considered with reference to accomplishing the end proposed;
e.g. လံၤယိၣ်ကၤလိၵ်, ယဖီဘၤအူၤ, this book is too difficult, I cannot read it.

ဝ့ၤ ability, considered with reference to skill, also the generic expression of
ability; e.g. ယဒၢဘၤန့ၤကၤက့ၤတၢ်, ယမးဝ့ၤလီၤ, I saw it only once yet I can do it.

152. The ideas of suitability, agreeableness etc. are often expressed in a
similar manner to that of potentiality;

e.g. နမးဆာယိၣ်ဘျဲၤ, dare you do this?

ယထူၣ်ပနီၤမုၤအူၤ, I do not like to ride a buffalo.

ပမးဆာယိၣ်မ့ၢ်အလဂုးဘၤ, had we not better do this?

ယမးဆာယိၣ်ကြံၣ်ၤ, is it proper for me to do this?

153. The verb မိ, expressing desire, takes ဆာ for its subject and is followed
by a verb denoting that act the performance of which is desired. This latter
verb is followed by ဘၤ, self, with the possessive case of a pronoun denoting
the person who desires to perform the action. Then comes the object of the
verb of action, generally introduced by လၢ,

e.g. ဆာမိဒၢယၢလၢအဝံၤလီၤ, I want to see him.

အဝံၤဒၢမိပွဲပနီၤလဒုးလီၤ, he wishes to buy a buffalo.

154. Possession is expressed by the verb အံၤ, to be in the following ways:

(1) The possessor stands as the subject and the thing possessed follows
the verb, with which it is connected by the preposition ဒဲ.

e.g. ယအံၤဒဲၣ်တၢ်ကဘီၣ်, I have a pencil.

(2) The thing possessed, modified by a possessive pronoun or noun, may stand as the subject of the verb; e.g. ယလံအိကဘံ, I have a book.

Adverbs.

155. Karen adverbs are mostly derived from other roots, though a few strictly adverbial roots exist.

Adverbs of Manner.

156. Adverbs of manner are regularly formed by duplicating adjective roots; e.g. ဆိဆိ, strongly, ဖျဲဖျဲ, quickly.

157. Adverbs so formed very commonly take the affix လဲ; e.g. ဆိဆိလဲ, very strongly.

158-160. Sometimes an adjectival root is used in an adverbial sense. This is commonly the case when it is itself modified by another adverb; e.g. အဝှဲဖျဲမလဲ, he runs very fast. ယဝှဲဖျဲအလဲ, I do not run swiftly.

161. Many adverbs of manner are irregular in their formation; e.g. လဲထဲလဲဆဲ, exactly.

162. Demonstrative adverbs of manner are formed by combining the preposition ဘဲ, like, with the demonstrative ယိ and နီ, or with လဲ; e.g. ဘဲယိ, ဘဲယိအိ, ဘဲနီ, ဘဲနီအိ, thus ဘဲလဲ, how, ဘဲအဲဘဲအိ, somehow. See [202](#).

Adverbs of Place.

163. Adverbs of place may be formed from the demonstrative adjectives ယိ and နီ in combination with the prepositions ထိ, လဲ, ထ or ခါခါ. They are exhibited in the following table, ထိယိ here, ထိနီ there, ထလဲ or ခါခါလဲ where. ထိယိထိနီ or ထိအဲထိအဲ here and there. လဲယိ here. လဲနီ there. ထလဲ where. လဲအဲလဲအဲ, here and there.

လၢယံး, hither. လၢနီၣ်, thither. ထလဲၣ်, whither. လၢယံးလၢနီၣ်, hither and thither.

164. The preposition လၢ forms adverbs of place in combination with such roots as ယၢ front, ခဲၣ် back, ထေ above, လဲ below, ဝါ beyond and ခီၣ် side, e.g. လၢယၢ forward, လၢခဲၣ် behind, လၢဝါခီၣ် beyond.

Adverbs of Time

165. Certain adverbs denoting past time are formed by the prefix လၢ in combination with roots denoting time, as follows: --

လၢဂီၤအံၤ, this morning

လၢမုၢ်န့ၣ်အံၤ, last night

လၢမုၢ်ဂၢၤအံၤ, yesterday

လၢအခီၤကန့ၣ်အံၤ, last week

လၢလၢခီၤကဘံၣ်အံၤ, last month

လၢမ့ၢ်ဂၢၤန့ၣ်အံၤ, last year

166. Adverbs expressing future time may be formed in two ways: --

(1) By the prefix [ကဲၤ T.P] [ကံၤ D.P]

ကဲမုၢ်ဆၢ/ကံမုၢ်ဆၢ, today.

ကဲမုၢ်ဂၢၤ/ကံမုၢ်ဂၢၤ, this evening.

ကဲမုၢ်န့ၣ်/ကံမုၢ်န့ၣ်, tonight.

ကဲဂီၤ/ကံဂီၤ, tomorrow.

ကဲတဂီၤ/ကံတဂီၤ, the day after tomorrow.

ကဲခဲၣ်/ကံခဲၣ်, in the future.

(2) By the prefix နး followed by ဒိၤs.

နးနံၣ်ဒိၤs, next day

နးန့ၣ်ဒိၤs, next week

နးနံၣ်ဒိၤs, next year

(3) By the use of the preposition လာ, cf. 164.

လာခဲ့/လာခဲ့ထဲ, afterwards.

လာယာ/လာယာခါ, in the future.

ထီးယီးလာယာ, henceforth.

167-168. လာ is prefixed to some temporal adverbs when the idea of futurity is not implied; e.g. လာမုဆါခါ, by day. လာဖိုးလာခဲ့, of old.

169. Many adverbs of time are not formed in accord with any rule;

e.g. ချဲ့ချဲ့, quickly, ထံ့ပဲ, always.

170. The roots ဒ်, still, yet, and လာ့, any more, are adverbial by virtue of their intrinsic signification. The following examples will illustrate their use; အဝါဆီမိုးလာအကင်္ဂါဒ် တဘျုးဘျုးလီ, he thinks he will still come several times. ယလဲဒ်အံ့, I have not yet gone. အဝါအဘျုးအံ့လာ့အံ့, he has no more paddy.

Numeral Adverbs.

171. Adverbs denoting how many times are formed from the cardinal numeral, in combination with the affix ဘျုး; လဘျုး, once. နံဘျုး, twice.

172. ဘျုး is treated like numeral auxiliaries, and may enter into all the combinations of which numeral auxiliaries are capable;

e.g. လဘျုးပဲ, simultaneously, at once (ကွဲကွဲ)

လဘျုးဘျုး sometimes

ကံ့ဘျုးဒ်, every time

လံဘျုးယာ, as many as four times.

173. Adverbs denoting which time are formed like ordinal numerals;

e.g. အဆုတ်လဘျုး, the first time, ဘာဘျုးလဘျုး, the third time.

174. The particle ကွဲ, ဖဲ, and ဘျုး enter into certain irregular formations;

e.g. ထီးနီကကွဲ, ထီးနီလဖဲ, ထီးနီလဘျုး, then, afterward, after that.

Adverbs of Degree.

175. Some adverbs of degree are formed like the adverbs of manner described in [156](#) and [157](#); e.g. ဒိပ်သီလုံ, greatly. အာအာလုံ, much.

176. The indefinite numeral adjectives described in [99](#). ([4](#)) ([6](#)) ([13](#)) are often used with an adverbial force;

e.g. ယအဲဒိပ်မဆမဆအဝှာယိးနးဆံးအုံ, I do not like doing this work at all.

177. The following adverbs are intensive, ခို, နး, and မး.

They are used with adjectives denoting smallness or fewness.

178. A moderate degree is expressed by coupling two contradictory roots, each of which is modified by a negative;

e.g. လဒိပ်လဆံး, လအာလရှု, moderately.

179. Other adverbs of degree are irregularly formed.

e.g. နးဆံးအုံ, not at all, ဖိးဘိး about, လိပ်, ထလံ့ or လိကဲကဲ, too.

180. Equality is expressed by မိပ်ပိး or မိပ်မိပ် e.g. အဝှာဖိလုံ ဖါထံး မိပ်ပိး or မိပ်မိပ် ဒဲမိထံးလိပ်, he reads Sgaw Karen equally with Pwo Karen.

181. Inequality is expressed by combination of two contradictory roots

expressive of quantity; e.g. အဝှာကြိပ်အဲဒိပ်ဆံးအာရှုအဖိလဟအုံ, he should not love his children unequally.

Interrogative Adverbs.

182. Interrogative adverbs of time and place may be formed from the interrogative particle လဲး;

e.g. ခိခိလဲး or ထခိလဲး where; ဆံးလဲး when, whence, whither.

183. These are reduplicated in indirect discourse;
e.g. အဝုၤဂဲၤခါခါလဲၣ်နီၣ် ယဝုၤယါအူၤ, or အဝုၤဂဲၤထီၣ်ခါလဲၣ်ခါလဲၣ်နီၣ် ယဝုၤယါအူၤ,
I do not know whence he comes.

184. Interrogative adverbs of quantity are formed by prefixing ဆံး to
adjectives of quantity; e.g. ဆံးအၤ, ဆံးဒိၣ် how much.

185. These are also repeated in indirect discourse. e.g. အဝုၤဒၢအဲၣ်ဒိၣ်ဝုၤ
ဆံးအၤဆံးအၤလဲၣ်နီၣ် ယဝုၤယါအူၤ, I do not know how much he wants it.

186. The interrogative adverb of reason is ဘၢနီၣ်, why?
e.g. ဘၢနီၣ်နလအံ့ဘၢမ့းလဲၣ်, why do not you eat rice?

Adverbs of Affirmation and Negation.

187. Assent is expressed by မွဲ or အံၤ.

188. Negative is expressed by affixing အူၤ; e.g. အဝုၤဂဲၤအူၤ, he has not come.

189. A denial is expressed by a negative sentence,
e.g. အဝုၤဂဲၤစၤ, ဂဲၤအူၤ, has he come? No.

190. Adverbs of probability are irregular in formation;
e.g. ဘၢလဘၢ, perhaps. တရူၤ or ရူၤမး certainly.

Conjunctive Adverbs.

191. The following are conjunctive adverbs of time ထီး, when
e.g. ထီးယဒၢဘၢန့ၣ်နီၣ် ယကလိးဘၢလီၤ, when I see your father I will tell him.

လချူၣ် before;

e.g. လချူၣ်ပလုၣ်ဒိၣ်ဘၢတး ပကအံ့ဆိၤဒၢခလူၤမ့းလီၤ, we will eat rice before we go.

အဘိဋ္ဌာန, အထေးဖျား, while; အဝှာလှေဆာအဘိဋ္ဌာနတန ဆာသဝံအာလီ, he was hungry while he was going. See [222](#).

192. ဒ် is used as a correlative conjunctive adverb; e.g. ယဒ်မးလိလံ ယဒ်အဲဒ်မးလိလံ, the more I study, the more I wish to study.

Adverbial Couplets.

193. Adverbial couplets are common; e.g. လာအာလုလုအခုထံ, in the beginning. ထီးအံးထီးအံး, here and there, ရှိရှိ slowly.

Comparison of Adverbs.

194. Adverbs which are derived from adjectival roots are susceptible of comparison. An adverb in the comparative or superlative degree is in form exactly the same as the corresponding adjective in the same degree; e.g. အဝှာစဲယုယုနဲအဖါ, he runs faster than his father.

Prepositions.

195. The Karen language has several prepositions, e.g. ဒဲ, စီးလု, လု, ထီး, ပံးလု, ဝးစီး.

196. ဒဲ means with, it governs the objective case.

197. စီးလု means to or towards; it governs the objective case, but စီး is often omitted.

198. လု means at or from, according to the context. It seldom governs a substantive directly, but usually governs a substantive in the possessive case. လု in itself is extremely indefinite, and the secondary nouns are brought in to make the meaning more definite.

199. The more common of the secondary nouns are exemplified below: --

လအဝုၤအအိၣ်, from him.

လဆရၢအကုၣ်ထံၣ်, by or near the teacher.

လပုၤဒိၣ်ဖၣ်ဒိၣ်အဆုၣ်ထံၣ်, at the governor's feet.

လယနဲးထံၣ်, by my side.

လၢရံၤအမုၤယၤ, in front of the chapel.

လၢတၢ်အလးခဲၣ်, behind the village.

လၢယချီၣ်လၢခီၣ်, on my back.

လၢကုၣ်ခါချီၣ်, on the earth.

လၢအဝုၤအလိၣ်, on him.

လၢကံၣ်ဖၣ်, in the house.

လၢစပွဲၣ်ခါ, လၢစပွဲၣ်အဖၣ်ခါ, on the table.

လၢယခါ, on my head.

လၢကံၣ်ဖၣ်လၢ/လၢကံၣ်အဖၣ်လၢ, under the house.

လၢပုၤရှၢကျဲး/လၢပုၤရှၢအကျဲး, among the people.

လၢတၢ်အဘိၣ်ဆၢ, between the villages.

လၢတၢ်အနဲးထံၣ်ဝၢဝၢ, round about the village.

လၢယဖိၣ်ခါအကဲး, for my son's sake, for my son.

လၢဆၢနီၣ်အကီၣ်, an account of that, because of that.

လၢဝံးတခါအဂဲး/လၢဝံးတခါအဂဲးအဖး/လၢဝံးတခါအဂဲးအကီၣ်, about Rangoon.

လၢထံၣ်ဖၣ်ခါ, on the surface of the water.

200. ထိး means in. It may govern the objective case.

201. ပံးလုၤ, throughout, ဝၢဝၢ, round about, govern the objective.

202. ဘဲၤ like, as, always govern the secondary noun ဝိး, the object of comparison being placed in the possessive case;

e.g. အဖိၣ်မး ဘဲၤဖါအဝိးလီၤ, the son acts like the father.

Sometimes the object of comparison is a noun clause, when ဘဲၤ corresponds in meaning to the English as; e.g. အဖိၣ်မးဝုၤ ဘဲၤအဖါမးဝုၤအဝိးနီၣ်လီၤ, the son does as his father does. See [228](#).

Conjunctions.

203. The Karen language has but few conjunctions, their place being supplied by phrases which are equivalent to conjunctions. These together with the more important conjunctive phrases will be found below.

Copulative.

204. ဒဲ and, connects words and phrases. It may stand at the close of the preceding clause or at the beginning of the following one.

ဒဲ--ဒဲ both-and.

e.g. ယွဲတဲးလဲးဒဲမုဲးလဲး, the Lord God created both sun and moon.

ငါ--ငါ and -- also, e.g. နားငါပုခွါ, ယားငါပုခွါ, ပာ်းမဲးအဲ, you are a man and I also am a man, we are not afraid.

မးဒိးလဲး, again.

လဲးယိး (or နီ) အမဲးယါ moreover.

လဲးယိး (or နီ) အမဲးခါ moreover.

မဲးနီ only.

Adversative.

205. အဲမဲ (at the beginning of a clause) but

လါနီ, လါနီတဲ, လါနီဘိး, but

အဲလဲးဘိး, or else

မဲးဂဲ--မဲးဂဲ, either -- or

ဂဲးဂဲ--ဂဲးဂဲ either -- or

e.g. ခဲတဲမဲးဂဲ လဲးမဲးဂဲ ပဲးနီယားလဲးမဲးမဲး, buy me either a pencil or a book.

Illative.

206. မဲးဘိးနီတဲ, အဲးမဲးဘိးနီတဲ, မးအဲးဘိးနီတဲ, အဲးတဲ, အဲးနီတဲ, and a few other phrases, take the place of the illative conjunction therefore.

207. The temporal adverbs ထိးနီလဲး, and ထိးနီလဲးဘိး, ထိးနီကဲ, then, sometimes have the force of illative conjunctions.

Causal.

208. အဂဲးဘဲၤယီၤ, because.

အကိုး because. This stands at the end of its clause; e.g. ယစုးရှုးအကိုး
ယဗ္ဗးလံၤန့အံၤ, I cannot buy a book because I am short of money.

209. ထီး when.

အံၤ if. In this sense အံၤ stands immediately after the subject. See [223](#).

လါန့ though, stands at the end of its clause;

e.g. အဗ္ဗးဒိၤလါန့ ယကဗ္ဗးလီၤ, although the prize is high, I shall buy it.

မဲလါန့ဘဲၤနီၤတၢ်, nevertheless.

Telic.

210-212. လၢ that. See [220](#). ဘဲၤဝံၢ် in order that. See [225-226](#).

Particles.

213. Most of the particles have been treated under the various parts of speech. A few which cannot be so treated to advantage are described here. They are used at the end of sentences to indicate the character of the sentence.

Affirmative Particles.

214-215. လီၤ is used with simple affirmatives. ဘဲၤ implies that the statement is a matter of course. ယူၣ် implies assent or concession.

Interrogative Particles.

216. ဧၤ is used when the answer expected is yes or no;

e.g. န့ၤအဝံၤဧၤ, do you see him?

လဲၤ is used when other answers are expected;

e.g. နမးနီၤလဲၤ, what are you doing?

ဧ--ဧ, is used in a direct alternative question.

နအဲဒ်ဒ်လံဧ, ခဲတုဧ, do you want a book or a pencil?

but ဧ--လဲ is used if the question is indirect;

e.g. အဝုလုလုတခိဧ, လမီလမဲ့လဲနီယဝုယာအု,

I do not know whether he goes to Rangoon or Moulmein.

Imperative Particles.

217. ဆံs, marks a command; လုဒ a prohibition;

ဘီ, a permission or a somewhat urgent request.

Precative Particles.

218. ဘီ at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence, asks for consent. Hence it softens a command into a request;

e.g. ပကထဲလုကံဘီ, let us go home, shall we not?

Syntax of Subordinate Clauses.

219. Subordinate clauses are not only introduced by a conjunction or some equivalent part of speech, but where they do not stand at the end of the sentence they are also terminated by a conjunction or other particle.

220-221. Noun and adjective clauses are introduced by လ and terminated by နီ; e.g. အဝုယာ လအဖါကအဝုနီ အု, he does not know that his father will eat it. လံလေယဖါကွဝုနီ အီလစပွဲခိလီ, the book which my father wrote is on the table.

222. Some adverbial clauses are introduced by လ or ထိ and terminated by a temporal particle, or by နီ;

e.g. လယလုအခါနီ ယဒပုရှုနးကအု, while I was going I saw nobody.

အဝုအကံအီ ထိယကံအီဝုဒါနီလီ, his house is where my house is.

223. Conditional clauses are introduced by အံ့, which stands immediately after the subject, and are terminated by တး;

e.g. ဆာအံ့ဂဲဆးတး နကဘာစီလီ, if it rains you will get wet.

An apparent, but not a real, exception to this rule is found in the case of complex sentences, in which a subordinate noun clause will come before အံ့;

e.g. နလဲအံ့သ့တး လဲဘီ, if you can go, go by all means.

224. အံ့ is occasionally used to introduce a concessive conditional clause ending in လါနုဂဲ, or လါနု; e.g. ဆာအံ့ဂဲဆးလါနုဂဲ နကဘာလဲလီ, even though it rains you will have to go.

225. Clauses of purpose are introduced by ဘဲဝိး and when not standing at the end of the sentence are terminated by တး;

ယထဲထဲလဲကံ့ ဘဲဝိးယကအံ့မ့လီ, I returned home that I might eat rice.

ဘဲဝိးနကအီဆီထဲထဲတး, နဘာအီသံ့ပံ့လီ, in order that you may recover, you must take medicine.

226. Negative clauses of purpose take the form of a prohibitory clause preceded by ဘဲဝိး, and terminated (when necessary) by တး;

e.g. ဘဲဝိးနထီးဆာလဲဂဲတး, နဘာအံ့ခိးဘာအံ့အံ့, in order that you may not get sick, you must not eat unripe mango.

227. Negative clauses of purpose are sometimes left without an introductory particle, and are terminated by ဘာခိး or ဘာရှုး; လဲဘူလဲထံဖးနီလဲဂဲ, နကလဲထဲဘဲခိးလီ, do not go near the well, lest you fall into it.

228. Clauses of comparison are introduced by ဘဲ and terminated by အိးနီ; e.g. ဘဲအဖါမဲဝဲအိးနီ, အဖါမဲဝဲဘဲနီအိးဆဲလီ, as the father does, so does the son also. See [202](#).